



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4  
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER  
61 FORSYTH STREET  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

JUL 30 2014

Ms. Antoinette Pierson  
eCivis, Inc.  
418 N. Fair Oaks Avenue, Suite 301  
Pasadena, California 91103

**RE: Freedom of Information Request Number EPA-R4-2014-006527**

Dear Ms. Pierson:

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated May 15, 2014, regarding a copy of a winning grant application from a city or county for the most recent award cycle or a copy of a winning grant application from a state, non-profit, or other type of agency that has met or exceeded the standards and expectations of the Wetland Program Development Grants Program.

Please find enclosed a copy of the proposal from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Fees are waived as de minimis.

You may appeal this response to the National Freedom of Information Officer, U.S. EPA, FOIA and Privacy Branch, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. (2822T), Washington, D.C. 20460 (U.S. Postal Service Only), Email: [hq.foia@epa.gov](mailto:hq.foia@epa.gov). Only items mailed through the United States Postal Service may be delivered to 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. If you are submitting your appeal via hand delivery, courier service or overnight delivery, you must address your correspondence to 1301 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room 6416J, Washington, D.C. 20004. Your appeal must be made in writing, and it must be submitted no later than 30 calendar days from the date of this letter. The Agency will not consider appeals received after the 30 calendar day limit. The appeal letter should include the FOI number listed above. For quickest possible handling, the appeal letter and its envelope should be marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal."

Should you have questions regarding this response, please contact Donna Robinson at (404) 562-9500 or [robinson.donna@epa.gov](mailto:robinson.donna@epa.gov).

Sincerely,

Kenneth R. Lapierre  
Assistant Regional Administrator

Enclosure



**1. A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida**

**2. Track Two Applicant**

**3. Florida Wetland Program Plan:** Implements *Core Element 2, Regulatory, Other Program Activities (Regulatory): "Consolidate WMD & DEP databases of conservation easements."* The Florida WPP was posted on the date of the RFP publication.

**4. EPA Appendix A.III. Core element: Actions: Set 4: a.** Develop and populate accessible tracking database for conservation easement restoration/protection sites.  
**4.b.** Develop a system to track acres or numbers of restored/protected wetlands that are in conservation easements.

**5. Applicant:** Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (SWFRPC – fiscal agent)  
**DUNS Number:** 827921649

**6. Key Personnel:**

James W. Beever, III, Principal Investigator  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Fort Myers, FL 33901  
239-338-2550, ext. 224  
[jbeever@swfrpc.org](mailto:jbeever@swfrpc.org)

Liz Donley, J.D., Grant Manager  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Fort Myers, FL 33901  
239-338-2550, ext 234  
[ldonley@swfrpc.org](mailto:ldonley@swfrpc.org)

**7. Geographic Location:** State of Florida (this is a statewide project)

**8. Total project cost: \$294,496 Federal dollars requested: \$191,891**  
**Cost share/match: \$102,605 [Non-eligible federal: \$14,883; not included in totals]**

**9. Abstract**

*A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida* is an interactive GIS-based database for restoration/protection sites with recorded permanent conservation easements. Conservation easements are an important component of the State's wetland regulatory and wetland conservation planning efforts and an important land protection tool on which Florida has placed a much greater emphasis. Since 1994, the State of Florida, its agencies, local governments and non-governmental organization partners have recognized the need to establish a single centrally accessible interactive, data repository for all conservation easements granted in the State. Currently, there is no comprehensive map and database for all the conservation easements in Florida. A one stop shop for the existence of easements would serve to streamline the FDEP's regulatory review process. This project implements the State of Florida Wetland Program Plan. The final deliverables will be the GIS database and accompanying map products, including metadata and a GIS query tool usable by any person with access to the internet. The GIS database will assist users (including State staff) in locating and identifying conservation easements through the different attributes of the properties so that searches can be performed for easements by type, location, type of habitat, identity of easement holders, year of designation, monitoring reporting, etc.

**B. Project Description**

1. Program Priorities – Track Two

**A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida** implements the State of Florida Wetland Program Plan (WPP) *Core Element 2. Regulatory, Other Program Activities (Regulatory)*: “Consolidate WMD & DEP databases of conservation easements.” Specifically, the Project Team will develop and populate an interactive GIS-based database for restoration/protection sites which have recorded permanent conservation easements. This project also directly supports **EP4 Strategic Plan Goal 2** (Clean and Safe Water), Objective 2 (Protect Water Quality), Sub Objective 1 (Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis).

2. Description of Need

Conservation easements are an important component of the State's conservation planning efforts and an important land protection tool on which Florida has placed a much greater emphasis. Although the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the water management districts (WMDs) and the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) each have maps and some information on conservation easement for which they are responsible, at this time there is no comprehensive map and database for all the conservation easements in Florida. Various State agency staff have confirm that it would enhance the State's conservation land protection programs to have the capability to correctly identify and locate the conservation easements in and adjacent to the State's public conservation lands and Florida Forever projects. This capability will facilitate identification of potential landscape corridors between major conservation hubs, potential buffers to existing State conservation lands, and the protection status of proposed Florida

Forever projects and adjacent lands. A "one stop shop" for verifying and locating the existence of easements would serve to streamline the FDEP's regulatory review process<sup>1</sup>.

Since 1994, the State of Florida, its agencies, local governments and NGO partners have recognized the need to establish a single, centrally accessible interactive, data repository for all conservation easements granted in the State. In Florida, the location, ownership, and restrictions of conservation easements have not been mapped, recorded and managed in a single unified database that is accessible to regulators, State agencies, State affiliated agencies, the public and subsequent and adjacent land owners. Rather, in addition to the 67 Clerk of Court offices which record conservation easements in the lands records, there are at least 15 different, non-compatible databases (developed by conservation easement holders or regulators and maintained as separate record systems) with information about permanent conservation easements. In addition, it is unknown whether all these databases are up to date, or whether the data that has been captured is accurate and complete.<sup>2</sup> The Project Team [CHNEP, SWFRPC, Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) and FNAI] identified the need for a cooperative, collaborative project to create a consolidated, comprehensive GIS-database populated with information for all existing permanent conservation easements<sup>3</sup> in Florida.

The FDEP in *The Florida Wetland Protection Plan* identifies "Consolidate WMD & DEP databases of conservation easements" as a priority action to implement Goal 2 Regulation:

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<sup>1</sup> Summarized from email from Greg Brock, Bureau Chief, FDEP, Office of Environmental Services

<sup>2</sup> For instance, the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council had maintained a CAD-database of the boundaries map of conservation easements associated with Developments of Regional Impact up to the early 2000's but no longer updates the files. A second example is the multiple conservation databases that have differing data fields capturing site information.

<sup>3</sup> The Project Team will not be mapping term-limited conservation easements, such as WRP CE leases.

Florida's regulatory program goals are to avoid and minimize net loss in wetland and other surface water functions, to preserve wetland and other surface water functions, and to mitigate unavoidable and unauthorized losses by replacing lost and degraded functions through enhancement, restoration, creation, and preservation of healthy wetlands and other surface waters. Objectives supporting this goal are intended to promote efficient administration of regulatory efforts by streamlining regulatory processes and operating under consistent procedures; evaluate regulatory activities to ensure environmental results; ensure consistency throughout the Department and delegated programs; continue development of Florida's strong regulatory program by strengthening regulation, policies, and guidance documents.

In 2011, the FDEP stated ([www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wetlands/techgis/conease.htm](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wetlands/techgis/conease.htm)):

In order to implement a fully effective permit processing Geographic Information System (GIS) permit review staff must have the ability to obtain accurate permit and conservation easement site locations. In addition, obtaining accurate historic permit and conservation easement site location information is a critical need for DEP, the WMDs and the COE. Absent such information it is impossible to retrieve useful GIS data as it relates to a specific permit application or conservation easement nor is it possible to begin to assess cumulative and secondary impacts to a watershed from development activities or develop adequate mitigation and conservation strategies.

Conservation easements have increasingly become a preferred tool used in wetland regulatory permitting, wetland conservation, and wetland mitigation banking in the State of Florida. The first use of perpetual wetland conservation easement in Florida occurred in the early 1970's when the concept of wetland mitigation was incorporated into the policies of the State and Federal permitting process. Today, conservation easements are an established presence in the wetland landscapes of Florida with easements being granted to and enforced by federal, State, and local government agencies, land trusts and private conservation organizations, homeowners associations, and corporate entities.

In 2012, the Florida Division of State Lands Conservation Easement Program published a 6 page guidance document presenting information about the State's conservation easement efforts since the 1994 publication of *Closing the Gaps in Florida's Wildlife Habitat Conservation System* by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission (now the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission). The landmark study determined how much habitat would be necessary to ensure the long-term survival of a group of endangered and threatened species in Florida. After recognizing that the State could never purchase and manage all of the lands necessary to protect all of Florida's native biota, the study proposed that secondary habitat areas could be protected by conservation easements, eliminating the need for the State of Florida to purchase the lands in fee-simple and subsequently having to manage the lands.

Since publication of *Closing the Gaps*, the Florida Legislature began emphasizing the usefulness of conservation easements for protecting Florida's natural and cultural resources. Legislation establishing both Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever included language encouraging the purchase of conservation easements in addition to fee-simple acquisition of conservation lands. Florida's Governor and Cabinet, sitting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of Florida, oversee the acquisition and management of State-owned conservation lands, and have also endorsed the importance of conservation easements. The Acquisition and Restoration Council and its predecessor, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council, both created separate acquisition categories for conservation easements.

During regional wildlife habitat and wildlife corridor planning efforts, the principle investigator with the assistance of team members assembled some of the first

maps that combined conservation easements with other conservation land and managed lands mapping to clearly demonstrate the linkages of conservation easements in the larger biogeographic landscape context. This demonstrated how some easements perform vital functions in landscape connectivity, hydrologic restorations, and natural water quality treatments. However, even these efforts are incomplete since they were unable to capture unmapped and poorly recorded easements and the databases were older than current time in part from delay of recording and the periodicity of updates. At this time, there is no complete map and database for all the conservation easements in Florida. It is the intent of this project to address and rectify this.

In addition to wetland conservation easements acquired to protect flora, fauna, and habitat corridors, Florida has increased the designation of conservation easements directly attributable to regulatory requirements – as conditions for wetland permits from regulatory agencies and developments order approvals from municipalities, and counties.

The FDEP Office of Environmental Services tracks and annually reports on conservation easements associated with State conservation land purchases, but does not have the resources to track conservation easements associated with local and federal permits and acquisitions. FNAI, a component of Florida State University's Florida Resources and Environmental Analysis Center, also maintains information on non-regulatory conservation easements acquired by the State, water management districts, federal government, and many non-profit conservation organizations. FNAI's information, including interactive maps of where the easements are located, can be accessed at [www.fnai.org](http://www.fnai.org)



The Project Team's review of FNAI's maps and data and correspondence from the State's Division of Community Development indicate that there are conservation easements recorded with the County Clerks of Courts associated with regulatory permitting, Developments of Regional Impact, private conservation organizations and local governments that are not currently included in these information sources. In addition, some conservation easements mapped in existing GIS products have not yet been recorded with the Clerks of Courts, although the map files indicate recording has occurred.

The Project Team will access Clerk of Courts records, County Property Appraiser databases, WMDs' Permit databases, FDEP's records and Regional Planning Council Development of Regional Impact files to identify and map conservation easements that are not currently in the operational conservation lands databases. Project staff will work with the "owners" of the various databases in order to ensure that data gaps are identified and resolved and that a single compatible GIS database is one of the project outputs. The Project Team has identified the following resources for relevant data, metadata and maps:

- FNAI: <http://data.labins.org/imf2/FREAC/FNAL.jsp>
- Fl. Dept. Environmental Protection: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/arc.htm>
- Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL): [www.fgdl.org](http://www.fgdl.org)
- NRCS National Easement Staging Tool (NEST)
- National Conservation Easement Database: <http://www.conservationeasement.us/>
- The Conservation Registry [www.conservationregistry.org](http://www.conservationregistry.org)
- Water Mgt. Districts databases: <http://my.sfwmd.gov/ePermitting/MainPage.do>
- Clerks of Courts records such as: [www.clerk.co.sarasota.fl.us/oprapp/oprinq.asp](http://www.clerk.co.sarasota.fl.us/oprapp/oprinq.asp)
- County Property Appraiser databases such as [www.leepa.org](http://www.leepa.org)
- Florida Regional Planning Councils: DRI Map H files
- Florida Community Planning & Development

3. Outputs, Outcomes, and Results

This project will identify and map all the permanent conservation easements in the State of Florida: federal, State, regional, and local government; private land trusts and conservation organizations, corporations, Homeowners Associations, and privately (developer, individual) held conservation easements. See **Table 1: Outputs, Outcomes and Results**, below for a presentation of outputs, outcomes, linkage to EPA Strategic Plan, and tracking of outputs/outcomes.

The final deliverables will be the GIS database and accompanying map products including metadata and a GIS query tool usable by any person with access to the internet. The GIS database will assist users (including State staff) in locating and identifying conservation easements through the different attributes of the properties so that searches can be performed for easements by type, location, type of habitat, identity of easement holders, year of designation, monitoring reporting, etc.

4. Project Tasks

1. Identify and evaluate available digital and hard copy conservation easement mapping data sets from USACE, USEPA, USFWS, NRCS, USDA, NEPs, FDEP, FFWCC, the 5 Water Management Districts, the 11 RPCs, the 67 Florida Counties and the 21 Florida Land Trusts and from pre-existing conservation easement databases.
2. Inventory and determine the physical extent of the permanent conservation easements throughout Florida.
3. Identify conservation easements that have not been mapped but are recorded in official documents such as title records, property deeds, and development orders.

*(cont'd)*

**A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida**

**Table I. Outputs, Outcomes and Results**

| <b>Table Link</b> | <b>Outputs</b>  | <b>Outcomes</b>  | <b>Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan</b>  | <b>Tracking Outputs and Outcomes</b>                   |
|-------------------|---|--|---|--|
| A                 | Protocols and methodology for identifying wetland CEs and CE owners, beneficiaries.   | Identification of wetland CEs recorded in deeds, permits, development orders; identification of parties responsible for management, monitoring; reason for CE.   | Each task conducted in the development the state-wide conservation easement GIS-database is directly linked to the Goal 2, Objective 2.2 of the EPA strategic plan. The completed GIS-database will contain all permanent wetlands conservation easements including those that are currently not mapped or not recorded and not being incorporated into wetlands impacts and restoration, preservation and conservation decisions. Federal, State and local agencies will have the tools to increase their ability to determine the success of water quality and habitat improvements attributable to wetlands. | Populating GIS data fields.                            |
| B                 | Unified GIS maps of all the conservation easements in the State of Florida; beta-test GIS-database with participating agencies. | Coordinated use of maps by federal, State, local government, and public sector to find and identify conservation easements through the different attributes of the properties; searches by conservation easements type, location, habitat, easement holders, year of designation, monitoring reporting, etc. |   | Complete QC-approved maps.                             |
| C                 | GIS Linked Standardized Metadata associated with of all the wetland conservation easements in Florida.                          | Coordinated use of maps by federal, State, local government, and public sector to find and identify conservation easements.  |   | Complete standardized meta-database.                   |
| D                 | GIS database finalized with consensus for all wetland agencies and entities, GIS-database uploaded.                             | Federal, State and local access to conservations easements with visual depiction and links to narrative descriptions; increased ease of monitoring CEs.  |   | Counter on website to track number of unique accesses. |
| E                 | Final Report, including all final deliverables.   | Complete report on the process of development, construction and QA/QC of the GIS-map and metadatabase for reference by product users.  |   | Final Report and deliverables submitted on time.       |
| F                 | Progress Reports.   | EPA, Project Team and project partners apprised of project status on a timely basis.   |   | Reports submitted on time, project within budget       |

3. (cont'd) Contact Clerks of Courts, Regional Planning Councils, Water Management Districts, County Community Development Departments.
4. Map and tabulate the location of conservation easement extents by type into an interactive GIS product so that a cursor click on a conservation easement directly links to collected data for the conservation easement.
5. Propose refinements to Florida conservation easement mapping related to quantity and quality of data as appropriate.
6. Assemble the Draft Report from outputs of the completed tasks and develop illustrations, tables, and graphs for inclusion in the Draft Report. Perform five percent internal audit of mapped conservation easements to original narrative documents.
7. Present Draft Report for peer review and public for comment through the CHNEP and SWFRPC websites.
8. Compile, review and incorporate peer-review and public comments.
9. Complete Final Report and obtain approval through the CHNEP Management Conference.
10. Produce narrative texts within EPA Quarterly Report providing information about project progress, issues encountered, proposed resolution, and anticipated work. Information about financial status will be included in the appropriate section of the Quarterly Report.

5. Partnership Information

The core Project Team is comprised of CHNEP, SWFRPC, FNAI and FGCU GIS Program. FDEP and the Southwest Florida Water Management District, two of the agencies specifically mentioned the Florida WPP, have submitted letters of support and are expected to be active participants in the development of the conservation easement GIS-database. The Project Team PI will be responsible for development of the project Scope of Work, for overall conduct of the

project and for ensuring coordination among the Project Team and project partners so that the final products are compatible, complete, can be updated and fulfills the Florida WPP. FGCU will provide expertise to import data and assist with the GIS database development. FNAI will provide guidance and expertise to ensure compatibility of the end product with its current databases. CHNEP/SWFRPC staff will ensure compatibility of the GIS-database with existing conservation easement databases and conduct QA/QC tasks

The Project Team will be extensively coordinating with the USACOE, USEPA, NRCS, USDA, the 4 Florida NEPs, FDEP, FFWCC, the 5 WMDs (Northwest, South, Southwest, St. Johns River, Suwannee River), the 67 Florida Counties (20 of which have their own acquisition programs) and the 21 Florida Land Trusts.

6. Milestone Schedule (linked to output/outcome Table 1)

**Table 2: Milestones and Project Schedule:**

| Task | Table 1 Link | Milestones  | Period of Performance      |
|------|--------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1    | A            | Develop methodology for identifying and acquiring available digital and hard copy CE data sets; initiate data filed development Acquire and evaluate available digital and hard copy conservation easement mapping data sets.   | October 2013-April 2014    |
| 2    | A            | Inventory and determine the physical extent of conservation easement study area.  | January 2013-Sept 2014     |
| 3    | A            | Identify conservation easements described in hardcopy sources that have not been mapped.  | January 2013-June 2014     |
| 4    | B            | Map and tabulate the location of conservation easement extents by type into an interactive GIS product so that a cursor click on a conservation easement directly links to panoramic photographs, species lists, functional assessment scores and other collected data. | October 2013-January 2014  |
| 5    | B            | Propose refinements to conservation easement mapping related to quantity and quality as appropriate   | November 2013-January 2014 |
| 6    | C            | Assemble the Draft Report from outputs of the completed Tasks and develop illustrations, tables, and graphs for inclusion in the Draft Report.  | November 2013-May 2014     |

| Task | Table 1 Link | Milestones  | Period of Performance    |
|------|--------------|---|--------------------------|
| 7    | C            | Present Draft Report for peer review to the CHNEP Management Conference and provide to the public for comment through the CHNEP and SWFRPC websites.  | May 2014-June 2014       |
| 8    | D            | Compile, review and incorporate peer-review and public comments.  | June 2014-July 2014      |
| 9    | E            | Complete Final Report and obtain approval through the CHNEP Management Conference.  | July 2014-September 2014 |
| 10   | F            | Produce narrative text within EPA Quarterly Report providing information about project progress, issues encountered, proposed resolution, and anticipated work. Information about financial status will be included in the appropriate section of the Quarterly Report. | Quarterly                |

#### 7. Detailed Budget Workplan

##### **Personnel**

Mr. James Beever will be responsible for coordinating project asks among the Project Team members. He will guide project progress, and ensure that QA/QC tasks are conducted and any corrections implemented. He will be the primary contact between the Project Team and US EPA. It is estimated that he will spend approximately 25% of his time on the project.

Mr. Tim Walker will be the lead on the GIS-database development and metadata capture. He will coordinate the work of the GIS team (2 FGCU graduate students, 1 FGCU GIS contractor) and FNAI staff. Approximately 25% of his time will be devoted to the project.

Ms. Donley will supervise legal interns assisting with research locating unrecorded and/or unmapped conservation easements and quality control. She will provide grant administration to the project. Approximately 12% of her time will be spent on the project. The CHNEP has a federally approved fringe and indirect rate agreement.

**A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida**

| Staff & Level of Effort   | Year 1   | Year 2<br>2% COLA | Total    | Total<br>Requested | Total<br>Match   | Non-<br>eligible<br>Federal<br>match |
|---|----------|-------------------|----------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Program Scientist 0.25 FTE, \$31.70/hour                                  | \$16,484 | \$16,814          | \$33,298 | \$33,298           | \$0              | \$0                                  |
| GIS Specialist 0.25 FTE, \$31.08/hour                                     | \$16,162 | \$16,480          | \$32,641 | \$32,641           | \$0              | \$0                                  |
| Land Use Attorney 0.10 FTE, \$36.44/hour                                  | \$7,580  | \$7,731           | \$15,311 | \$0                | \$15,311         | \$0                                  |
| Grants Administration, 56 hrs/yr, \$36.44/hour                            | \$2,041  | \$2,081           | \$4,122  | \$0                | \$0              | \$4,122                              |
| <b>a. Personnel Total</b>   | \$42,266 | \$43,106          | \$85,372 | \$65,939           | \$15,311         | \$4,122                              |
| b. Fringe Benefits (federally approved rate)                              | 0.43651  |                   |          | \$28,783           | \$6,683          | \$1,799                              |
| c. Travel Total Mileage (\$0.445/mi) approximately 1,750 mi/yr to QC data |          |                   |          | \$0                | \$0              | \$1,869                              |
| d. Equipment Total  |          |                   |          | \$0                | \$0              | \$0                                  |
| e. Supplies Total (photocopying)  |          |                   |          | \$0                | \$0              | \$500                                |
| f. Contractual Total  |          |                   |          | \$42,896           | \$0              | \$0                                  |
| FGCU grad \$12 hour 20 hours /week 3 semesters for 2 years                |          |                   | \$21,600 |                    |                  |                                      |
| FGCU GIS contractor \$20/hr 10 hrs/ wk for 100 weeks                      |          |                   | \$21,296 |                    |                  |                                      |
| <b>h Other - match</b>  |          |                   |          |                    |                  |                                      |
| CHNEP Mgt. Conference 60 members, 2 meetings x 1.5 hours x \$70/hour      |          |                   |          | \$0                | \$12,600         | \$0                                  |
| Legal interns, 4interns, 80hours ea. X \$10 W/S hourly rate               |          |                   |          | \$0                | \$0              | \$3,200                              |
| FGCU in-kind match GIS Professional staff for 2 years                     |          |                   |          | \$0                | \$48,688         | \$0                                  |
| CHNEP WaterAtlas project page \$2,000 per year                            |          |                   |          | \$0                | \$4,000          | \$0                                  |
| FNAI minimum 80 hr @ \$27/hour + 26% O/H                                  |          |                   |          | \$0                | \$2,721          | \$0                                  |
| <b>i. Total Direct Charges</b>  |          |                   |          | \$137,618          | \$90,003         | \$11,490                             |
| j. Indirect (federally approved rate)                                     | 0.57298  |                   |          | \$54,274           | \$12,602         | \$3,393                              |
| <b>Total requested:</b>   |          |                   |          | <b>\$191,891</b>   |                  |                                      |
| In-Kind Match Total   |          |                   |          |                    | <b>\$102,605</b> |                                      |
| Non-eligible Federal Match  |          |                   |          |                    |                  | <b>\$14,883</b>                      |
| <b>k. Project TOTAL:</b>  |          |                   |          | <b>\$294,496</b>   |                  |                                      |

### **Travel & Supplies**

The CHNEP will provide non-eligible Federal match funds for travel and supplies.

### **Contractual**

Funds will pay FGCU for 2 graduate students and 1 contract staff to conduct GIS tasks.

### **Other – match**

CHNEP Management Conference will review and provide comments on the interim project products and the Draft deliverables.

The Ave Maria Legal interns will conduct title searches and quality control tasks. This is non-eligible Federal in-kind match; they are paid with Federal work-study funds.

FGCU will provide eligible in-kind match through time spent by Dr. Marguerite Forester and David Green on the project and supervising the graduate students and contract staff.

The CHNEP will provide eligible in-kind match by posting interim and final products to the WaterAtlas website.

FNAI has committed a minimum of 80 hours of staff time to the project in eligible in-kind match. This is a critical in-kind match as it will ensure that the final GIS-database and metadata is compatible with current FNAI databases and that the functionality will be useable, relevant and comprehensive.

8. Restoration Demonstration Project Information - Not Applicable

9. Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/Qualifications

The CHNEP has the programmatic capability and administrative resources to successfully manage this project. Project management will be conducted in partnership between the CHNEP and its host agency (fiscal agent) the SWFRPC. The CHNEP will serve as overall project manager, responsible for administering the grant, and conducting project reporting



activities, the SWFRPC will ensure all fiscal reporting criteria are met and funds are disbursed appropriately.

**Principle Investigator, James W. Beever, III, MS**, is an expert in Southwest Florida environmental planning and permitting with over 28 years direct experience in the region. Mr. Beever provides environmental planning review for Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Sarasota Counties, coordinating regional wildlife habitat planning, review of developments of regional impact, review and planning of significant regional and mega-regional restoration projects (CERP, SWFFS), the Coastal Conservation Corridor project and other wildlife corridor mapping efforts in Florida, and the review of FDEP, WMDs and USACOE permits, development and review of wildlife resource inventories, and fish and wildlife technical assistance to federal, State, local governments and NGOs. He has extensive expertise in wetland conservation easement requirements and has already identified the critical data for the project.

*Resumes for key Project Team staff are provided in the attachments.*

10. Transfer of Results

The CHNEP is a partnership program and will ensure the transfer of results to partners, the general public, decision-makers and elected officials. The CHNEP Management Conference partners will be updated on project progress at quarterly Management Conference meetings and receive presentations at the mid-point and project end. The project results will be shared with Federal, State, local governments, NGOs and the general public through direct presentations and technical assistance contacts. Links to the GIS databases will be posted to the CHNEP and SWFRPC websites, the CHNEP's Water Atlas website [www.chnep.wateratlas.usf.edu](http://www.chnep.wateratlas.usf.edu) and made available to partners and the general public. The results of the project will be reported as a paper or set of papers prepared for publication in appropriate refereed scientific journals.

C. Past Performance

The SWFRPC has extensive experience completing Federally-funded projects on time and within budget. The key staff have experience successfully conducting EPA Region 4 Wetlands Program Development Grant projects. Verbal updates are given to EPA on a regular basis, site visits are conducted and progress reports submitted on time.

| Agency/Grant #    | CDFA#  | Grant Period       | Federal            | Non-Federal        | Total               |
|-------------------|--------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| EPA CE-95483611-1 | 66.456 | 10/1/11 – 03/31/15 | \$1,195,967        | \$1,195,967        | \$2,391,934         |
| EPA CD-95488111-0 | 66.461 | 10/1/11 – 9/30/14  | \$359,378          | \$194,940          | \$554,318           |
| EPA CD-95450310-0 | 66.461 | 1/1/10 – 6/30/12   | \$299,725          | \$140,000          | \$439,725           |
| EPA CE-96457406-7 | 66.456 | 10/1/06 – 3/31/13  | \$3,009,350        | \$3,014,950        | \$6,024,300         |
| EPA CD-96484907-2 | 66.461 | 10/1/07 – 06/30/11 | \$470,494          | \$158,334          | \$628,828           |
| <b>TOTALS</b>     |        |                    | <b>\$5,334,914</b> | <b>\$4,704,191</b> | <b>\$10,039,105</b> |

D. Quality Assurance/Quality Control

The project will not collect “environmental data” as defined in the RFP. The Project Team is committed to conducting quality control protocols for the GIS database. Standard metadata protocols will be established for all generated databases and GIS information layers. Quality control will be performed on the mapped conservation easements and between conservation easement narrative descriptions, graphic representations, maps and GIS products. All GIS products will be compliant with Federal Geographic Data Committee standards in order to ensure geospatial interoperability.

E. Invasive Species Control – Not Applicable

F. Optional Attachments:

- i. map/ screen shots from FNAI
- ii. staff resumes: CHNEP/SWFRPC, FGCU
- iii. support letters: including: FDEP, SWFWMD, US FWS, FNAI, and 14 others
- iv. email from Dept. Community Affairs confirming lack of CE data

## A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida

### **14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):**

**State:** Florida

#### **National Estuary Programs:**

- Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program Study Area
- Sarasota Bay Estuary Program
- Tampa Bay Estuary Program
- Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program

#### **National Estuarine Research Reserves:**

- Rookery Bay NERR
- Apalachicola NERR
- Guana Tolomato Matanzas

**Florida Aquatic Preserves:** 41 aquatic preserves encompassing 2.2 million acres

**Florida State Preserves and Parks:** 171 parks and trails, encompassing ~ 800,000 acres

**Florida State-owned conservation lands:** approximately 12 million acres

**Privately held Conservation Easements:** unknown

#### **Region 4 Priority Watersheds:**

- 03080102 Oklawaha
- 03090204 Big Cypress Swamp
- 03100101 Peace
- 03100203 Little Manatee
- 03100204 Alafia
- 03100205 Hillsborough
- 03130012 Chipola
- 03140104 Blackwater
- 03140105 Pensacola Bay
- 03080103 Lower St. John's
- 03080101 Upper St. John's

**Counties:** 67 counties

**Cities:** There are 283 cities, 108 towns and 19 villages in the U.S. state of Florida, a total of 410 incorporated municipalities



## **A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida**

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### **16. Congressional Districts**

#### **Applicant:**

FL-012

FL-013

FL-014

FL-016

FL-025

#### **Project: All 27 Congressional Districts**

FL-001                      FL-015

FL-002                      FL-016

FL-003                      FL-017

FL-004                      FL-018

FL-005                      FL-019

FL-006                      FL-020

FL-007                      FL-021

FL-008                      FL-022

FL-009                      FL-023

FL-010                      FL-024

FL-011                      FL-025

FL-012                      FL-026

FL-013                      FL-027

FL-014





## Florida's Conservation Lands

### Map Zoom

to County

to Conservation Land

### Show Conservation

within County

by Lead Managing Agency

Each conservation land is categorized by lead managing agency. Properties that have multiple managing agencies will be listed only by lead managing agency and not by secondary managers.

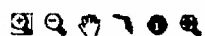
### Map Layers

- ☒ Conservation Lands
- ☐ Conservation Lands Text
- ☒ Florida Forever
- ☐ Digital Raster Graphics
- ☐ State Highways
- ☐ Local Roads
- ☒ Water Bodies
- ☐ Water Bodies Text
- ☐ Township Range
- ☐ Township Range Section

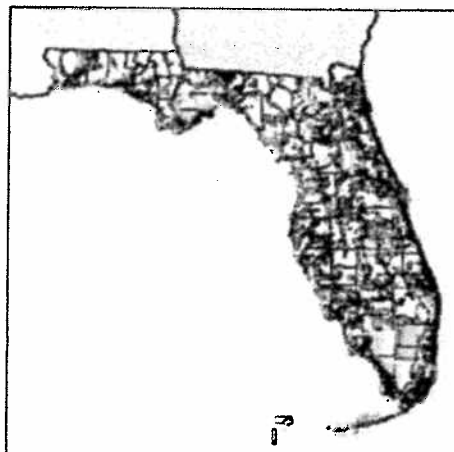
Data Last Updated: March 2013

Map is designed to be accessed with Internet Explorer or FireFox and may not work with other browsers. Please disable pop-up blockers before querying the map.

Not all conservation lands are open to the public; contact managing agency for additional information.



LEGEND



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**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS BUILDING  
3900 COMMONWEALTH BOULEVARD  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-3000

RICK SCOTT  
GOVERNOR  
HERSCHEL T. VINYARD JR.  
SECRETARY

April 2, 2013

Mr. Jim Beaver  
Planner IV  
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Ft. Myers, Florida 33901

Dear Mr. Beaver,

The Department of Environmental Resources supports your proposed project, "**A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida**" for funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's FY 13 Region 4 Wetland Program Development Grant.

Conservation easements are an important component of the state's conservation planning efforts and an important land protection tool on which Florida has placed a much greater emphasis. Although the Department, the water management districts and the Florida Natural Areas Inventory each have maps and some information on conservation easement for which they are responsible, at this time there is no comprehensive map and database for all the conservation easements in Florida. It would be very useful to our conservation land protection programs to be able to correctly identify and locate the conservation easements in and adjacent to the state's public conservation lands and Florida Forever projects to identify potential landscape corridors between major conservation hubs, potential buffers to existing state conservation lands, and the protection status of proposed Florida Forever projects and adjacent lands. A one stop shop for the existence of easements would serve to streamline the Department's regulatory review process.

Florida need as many tools as possible to develop and implement landscape scale wildlife corridors and habitat buffers for our unique biota, as well improved public access and enjoyments of our valuable natural resources. Florida's economy is based on a healthy environmental and healthy ecosystems that support the vital economic activities of fisheries, agriculture and tourism. A **Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database** would provide another good tool toward improving conservation planning in Florida.

The Division of State Lands strongly encourages you in this project and wishes you every success.

Sincerely,

O. Greg Brock, Ph.D.  
Chief, Office of Environmental Services  
Division of State Lands  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., M.S. 140  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000  
(850)-245-2763



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# Southwest Florida Water Management District

2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida 34604-6899  
(352) 796-7211 or 1-800-423-1476 (FL only)  
On the World Wide Web at [WaterMatters.org](http://WaterMatters.org)

**Bartow Service Office**  
170 Century Boulevard  
Bartow, Florida 33830-7700  
(883) 534-1448 or  
1-800-492-7862 (FL only)

**Sarasota Service Office**  
6750 Fruitville Road  
Sarasota, Florida 34240-9711  
(941) 377-3722 or  
1-800-320-3503 (FL only)

**Tampa Service Office**  
7601 U.S. 301 North  
Tampa, Florida 33637-6759  
(813) 985-7481 or  
1-800-836-0797 (FL only)

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**Douglas B. Sharp**  
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Citrus, Lake, Levy  
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**Wendy Griffin**  
Hillsborough  
**Randall S. Maggard**  
Pasco  
**George W. Mann**  
Polk

**Blake C. Gullery**  
Executive Director

March 27, 2013

Jim Beever, Planner IV  
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Ft. Myers, Florida 33901

Dear Mr. Beever,

The Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Program of the Southwest Florida Water Management District supports your proposed project, "A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida" for funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's FY 13 Region 4 Wetland Program Development Grant.

Conservation easements have increasingly become a preferred tool used in wetland regulatory permitting, wetland conservation, and wetland mitigation banking in the state of Florida. At this time there is no complete map and database for all the conservation easements in Florida. It would be very useful to our wetland protection and conservation programs to be able to correctly identify and locate the conservation easements within both ours and adjacent jurisdictions to provide better management and restorations of wetlands, improve watershed management of wetlands, and reduce land use change conflicts with the conservation easements.

Agencies, local governments and non-governmental organizations need as many tools as possible to develop and implement landscape scale wetland protection and restoration. The proposed project will address such tasks, as well as provide for improved public access and enjoyment of our valuable wetland resources. Florida's economy is based on excellent environmental and water quality resources provided by healthy wetland ecosystems, supporting such vital economic activities as fisheries, agriculture and tourism. A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database would provide another good tool toward improving water quality and enhancing wetlands in Florida.

The project supports important programs and initiatives within all four of the Southwest Florida Water Management District's Areas of Responsibility (AOR), most notably contributing to those of Water Quality and Natural Systems.

The SWIM Program strongly encourages you in this project and wishes you every success.

Sincerely,

*Lizanne Garcia*

Lizanne Garcia, Sr. Environmental Scientist  
SWIM Program, Natural Systems and Restoration Bureau

KLG:ih

cc: Jennette Seachrist, P.E., SWIM Program Manager, SWFWMD  
Joseph Quinn, Land Management Manager, SWFWMD  
Kris Kaufman, Staff Environmental Scientist, SWIM Program, SWFWMD

*Received*

MAR 29 2013

*SWFRPC*



## United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
South Florida Ecological Services Office  
1339 20<sup>th</sup> Street  
Vero Beach, Florida 32960



April 5, 2013

Jim Beever  
Planner IV  
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Ft. Myers, Florida 33901

Dear Mr. Beever,

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) reviewed and supports your proposed project, "**A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida,**" for funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's FY 13 Region 4 Wetland Program Development Grant.

Conservation easements have increasingly become a preferred tool used in wetland regulatory permitting, wetland and listed species habitat conservation, and mitigation and conservation banking in the state of Florida. At this time there is no complete map and database for all the conservation easements in Florida. Often these easements are recorded at a local level and not always presented as part of a review package. It would be very useful to our conservation and habitat planning programs, as well as our Everglades restoration program, to be able to correctly identify and locate the conservation easements in and adjacent to our jurisdiction; this information would help provide better management and restoration of conservation lands, allow planning for increased connectivity of preserved native lands in the landscape, improve watershed management of wetlands, and reduce land use change conflicts with the conservation easements.

Agencies need as many tools as possible to develop and implement landscape scale habitat protection and restoration and to improve public access and enjoyment of our valuable natural resources. South Florida's economy is based on a healthy environment and water quality provided by healthy wetland ecosystems and associated native uplands that support the vital economic activities of fisheries, agriculture and tourism. A **Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database** would provide another good tool toward improving water quality and enhancing wetlands in Florida.

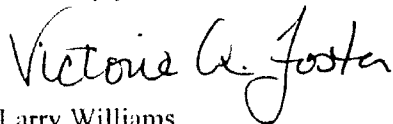
The project supports landscape-level planning for conservation and management of native habitats, including wetlands, that support multiple listed species in South Florida, which is important to the Service. Further, it would assist the Service in our project review to assure that previously recorded conservation easements are not impacted through new projects and that new conservation and mitigation is situated amid other protected areas in a manner that improves habitat connectivity.

Jim Beever

Page 2

The Service strongly encourages you in this project and wishes you every success. We look forward to seeing and utilizing the proposed **Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database**, once it is available.

Sincerely yours,

  
for Larry Williams  
Field Supervisor  
South Florida Ecological Services Office

cc: electronic copy only  
SWFRPC, Ft. Myers, Florida (Liz Donley)



1018 Thomasville Road  
Suite 200-C  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
850-224-8207  
fax 850-681-9364  
www.fnai.org

April 5, 2013

Copy of e-mail on FNAI letterhead as requested.

Jim and Liz-

Thank you for talking with Sally Jue, FNAI's Conservation Lands Biologist. We appreciate the opportunity to be a part of your EPA proposal to develop a conservation easement database for Florida. As Sally described for you, we've developed and maintained as part of our Conservation Lands database a subset of conservation easements in Florida. The attached Word document provides a cursory overview of our work with conservation easements that may be useful in your proposal preparation, especially as related to FNAI's involvement. I've also attached a summary of Florida Conservation Lands derived from our database.

Not knowing the details of your proposal and exactly how FNAI can most effectively assist, perhaps the best help I can provide now in the preparation of your proposal is to suggest a level of effort that we could commit to this project. We can commit participation by senior-level FNAI staff familiar with our conservation lands database from a minimum of 80 hours involvement, to a maximum of 160 hours (we can reevaluate this when we have a better understanding of how FNAI would be involved). The rate for a person with this level of experience is \$27.00/hour (including fringe benefits). As a part of Florida State University, FNAI has an overhead rate of 26%.

I hope this information is helpful. Sally is out of the office today but will return Monday morning. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards,  
Gary

Gary Knight  
Director  
Florida Natural Areas Inventory  
Florida State University  
1018 Thomasville Road, Suite 200-C  
Tallahassee, Florida 32303  
(850) 224-8207 x213  
www.fnai.org



Florida Resources  
and Environmental  
Analysis Center

Institute of Science  
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The Florida State University

*Tracking Florida's Biodiversity*



Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences  
209 Whitaker Hall  
Florida Gulf Coast University  
10501 FGCU Boulevard South  
Fort Myers, Florida  
33965-6565  
4 April 2013

Jim Beever  
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Fort Myers, Florida 33901

Dear Mr. Beever,

I am pleased to provide a letter of commitment for the proposal "**Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida**" being submitted to the EPA to identify and map all the conservation easements in the State of Florida.

The budget includes \$42,896 in contractual funds to Florida Gulf Coast University for a Graduate Research Assistant to work on data acquisition, processing, analyses, and mapping and for a GIS contractor to work on database design and programming for interactive internet mapping.

This will be matched by a total of \$48,688 of in-kind work, guiding and supervising the Graduate Research Assistant and coordinating with the GIS contractor. This will be done by myself and my colleague, Mr. David Green, Instructor II, working alternately during the Fall and Spring semesters each year for fifteen weeks to a maximum of one course load (three actual contact hours per week, plus preparation time), and with one person working for six weeks in each Summer of the project.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions concerning my letter of commitment.

Yours Truly,

Dr. Marguerite S.E. Forest, Assistant Professor  
Edith and Edward Andrew Endowed Chair in Environmental Education  
Joint Position with the Conservancy of Southwest Florida  
Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences  
209 Whitaker Hall, Florida Gulf Coast University  
10501 FGCU Boulevard South, Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565

Phone: (239) 590-7412; Email: [mforest@fgcu.edu](mailto:mforest@fgcu.edu)



Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences  
AB7 - 427, Florida Gulf Coast University  
10501 FGCU Boulevard South  
Fort Myers, Florida 33965-6565

April 2, 2013

Mr. Jim Beaver, Planner IV  
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Ft. Myers, Florida 33901

Dear Mr. Beaver,

The Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences supports your proposed project, "A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida" for funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's FY 13 Region 4 Wetland Program Development Grant.

Conservation easements have become a preferred tool used in wetland regulatory permitting, wetland conservation, and wetland mitigation banking in the state of Florida. However, there is no complete map and geospatial database for all the conservation easements in Florida from which our wetland specialist faculty and students, as well as many others, could learn about these lands and analyze the related data.

It would be very useful to wetland protection and conservation programs to be able to correctly identify and locate these conservation easements across a wide range of jurisdictions. This would enable better management and restoration of wetlands, improve watershed management of wetlands, and reduce land use change conflicts with existing and future conservation easements.

Florida's economy is based on a healthy environment and on good water quality provided by healthy wetland ecosystems that support the vital economic activities of fisheries, agriculture, and tourism. Both government and non-governmental organizations now need sophisticated spatial tools to develop and implement landscape-scale wetland protection and restoration and to improve public access for the enjoyment of our valuable wetland resources.

A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database would provide an excellent tool for improving water quality and enhancing wetlands in Florida. The project would support land and water conservation efforts statewide. The Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences strongly encourages you in this project and wishes you every success.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Savarese, Professor of Marine Science  
Department Chair Marine and Ecological Sciences

Phone: (239) 590-7165; Email: [msavares@fgcu.edu](mailto:msavares@fgcu.edu)



Tallahassee Office  
825 North Adams Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Tel (850) 222-0199  
Fax (850) 222-0973

[nature.org](http://nature.org)

March 29, 2013

Jim Beever  
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Ft. Myers, Florida 33901

Dear Mr. Beever,

This letter is provided by The Nature Conservancy in support of your proposed project, "**A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida**" for funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's FY 13 Region 4 Wetland Program Development Grant.

The Nature Conservancy has been utilizing conservation easements as a tool for conserving private lands in Florida for over 25 years. Conservation Easements have proven to be one of the most powerful and effective tools available for the conservation of lands that provide numerous public and environmental benefits, including, watershed, wetland and aquifer protection, buffers for national and state parks, military bases and national forests, agricultural opportunities, migratory corridors for wide-ranging animals and habitat for numerous rare and endemic plants and animals.

The Nature Conservancy works with various local, state and federal partners to develop and implement landscape scale conservation projects that will provide protection and restoration opportunities for the many important land and water resources found in Florida. It is vitally important to our conservation work to have state of the art tools available and currently a complete map and database for all the conservation easements granted in the state of Florida does not exist. **A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database**, in which all conservation easements are tracked, would provide a solid tool for improving collaboration among public agencies, non-profit organizations and the general public. Due to the fairly fast-paced growth rate Florida experiences each year, such a database would be very useful to our conservation program by allowing us the ability to correctly identify and locate all conservation easements, develop new watershed and landscape-scale projects, provide management guidance, and reduce land use change conflicts, all of which will enhance the quality of our fragile Florida environment, as well as the economic activities (e.g. fisheries, agriculture, tourism) important to our state.

The Nature Conservancy applauds your efforts to implement this project and wishes you every success.

Sincerely,

Greg Knecht  
Director of Protection





Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

March 30, 2013

Jim Beever  
Planner IV  
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Ft. Myers, Florida 33901

Dear Mr. Beever,

The Nature Conservancy supports your proposed project, **"A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida"** for funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's FY 13 Region 4 Wetland Program Development Grant.

Conservation easements have increasingly become a preferred tool used in wetland regulatory permitting, wetland conservation, and wetland mitigation banking in the state of Florida. At this time there is no complete map and database for all the conservation easements in Florida. It would be very useful to our wetland protection and conservation programs to be able to correctly identify and locate the conservation easements in our and adjacent jurisdictions to provide better management and restorations of wetlands, improve watershed management of wetlands, and reduce land use change conflicts with the conservation easements.

Non-governmental organizations need as many tools as possible to develop and implement landscape scale wetland protection and restoration and to improve public access for enjoyment of our valuable wetland resources. Florida's economy is based on a healthy environment and water quality provided by healthy wetland ecosystems that support the vital economic activities of fisheries, agriculture and tourism. A **Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database** would provide another good tool for improving water quality and enhancing wetlands in Florida.

The project supports The Nature Conservancy's land and water conservation efforts statewide. The Nature Conservancy strongly encourages you in this project and wishes you every success.

Sincerely,

Laura Geselbracht  
Senior Marine Scientist

2200 NE 17 Court, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33305, phone/cell: 954-383-3085, email: lgeselbracht@tnc.org



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FOUNDATION  
*of the Gulf Coast*

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March 30, 2013

Jim Beever  
Planner IV  
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
St. Myers, Florida 33901

Dear Mr. Beever:

Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, Inc. supports your proposed project, "**A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida**" for funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's FY 13 Region 4 Wetland Program Development Grant.

Conservation easements have increasingly become a preferred tool used to conserve environmentally sensitive lands in the state of Florida. It would be very useful to our land protection and conservation programs to be able to correctly identify and locate the conservation easements in our service area and those adjacent to ours, which will help guide future conservation planning.

Land trusts such as ours need as many tools as possible to develop and implement landscape scale wetland protection and restoration and to improve public access and enjoyments of our valuable wetland resources. Southwest Florida's economy is based on a healthy environmental and water quality provided by healthy wetland ecosystems that support the vital economic activities of fisheries, agriculture and tourism. A **Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database** would provide another good tool toward improving water quality and enhancing wetlands in Florida.

The project supports our large scale conservation planning and land acquisition efforts, which is important to Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast and other land trusts.

Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast strongly encourages you in this project and wishes you every success.

Sincerely,

Christine Johnson  
President

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# FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

*Affiliated With National Wildlife Federation*

Manley K. Fuller, III, President  
2545 Blairstone Pines Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32301  
Post Office Box 6870, Tallahassee, FL 32314-6870

Phone: (850) 656-7113  
Fax: (850) 942-4431  
website: [www.fwfonline.org](http://www.fwfonline.org)

March 25, 2013

Jim Beever, Planner IV  
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Ft. Myers, Florida 33901

*Received*

MAR 28 2013

*SWFRPC*

Re: A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for State of Florida

Dear Mr. Beever,

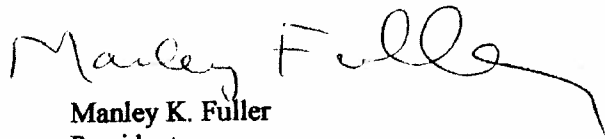
Florida Wildlife Federation endorses for funding your proposed project, **A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida**, through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's FY 13 Region 4 Wetland Program Development Grant.

In Florida, conservation easements are increasingly becoming a preferred tool in wetland regulatory permitting, wetland conservation, habitat compensation, and wetland mitigation banking. However, at this time there is no comprehensive map and database for all the conservation easements in Florida.

It will be extremely helpful in our wetland protection and habitat conservation programs across the State of Florida to have correctly identified and properly located conservation easements. The map and database will be invaluable in achieving habitat connectivity, providing effective regional management of conservation lands, reducing land use conflicts between conservation and development; and improving public access and enjoyment of Florida's natural world.

**A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida** is a much needed resource. The Federation supports your initiative in securing a Wetland Program Grant for this project.

Sincerely,

  
Manley K. Fuller  
President



**LEE COUNTY**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION**  
WWW.LEEPARKS.ORG

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

March 30, 2011

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Tammy Hall  
District Four

Frank Mann  
District Five

Mr. Beaver  
Planner IV

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Ft. Myers, Florida 33901

Dear Mr. Beaver,

Doug Meurer  
Interim County  
Manager

Michael D. Hunt  
County Attorney

Diana M. Parker  
County Hearing  
Examiner

The Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program staff strongly supports your proposed project, **"A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida"** for funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's FY 13 Region 4 Wetland Program Development Grant.

Conservation easements have increasingly become a preferred tool used in wetland regulatory permitting, wetland conservation, and wetland mitigation banking in the state of Florida. At this time there is no complete map and database for all the conservation easements in Florida. It would be very useful to our wetland protection and conservation programs to be able to correctly identify and locate the conservation easements in our and adjacent jurisdictions to provide better management and restorations of wetlands, improve watershed management of wetlands, and reduce land use change conflicts with the conservation easements.



Governments need as many tools as possible to develop and implement landscape scale wetland protection and restoration and to improve public access and enjoyments of our valuable wetland resources. Florida's economy is based on a healthy environment and water quality provided by healthy wetland ecosystems that support the vital economic activities of fisheries, agriculture and tourism. A **Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database** would provide another good tool toward improving water quality and enhancing wetlands in Florida.

The project supports our ability to see the conservation areas at a landscape level which is important to the overall management of Conservation 20/20 preserves.

Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program staff strongly encourages you in this project and wishes you every success.

Sincerely,

Cathy Olson  
Conservation Lands Manager  
239 533-7455  
Colson@leegov.com



# LEE COUNTY

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

## DIVISION OF COUNTY LANDS

(239) 533-8833  
FAX (239) 485-8391  
LThompson@leegov.com

John E. Manning  
District One

April 2, 2013

Cecil L. Pendergrass  
District Two

Larry Kiker  
District Three

Tammy Hall  
District Four

Frank Mann  
District Five

Doug Meurer  
Interim County  
Manager

Andrea R. Fraser  
Acting County  
Attorney

Diana M. Parker  
County Hearing

Jim Beaver, Planner IV  
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Ft. Myers, Florida 33901

Dear Mr. Beaver:

The Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program supports your proposed project, "A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida" for funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's FY 13 Region 4 Wetland Program Development Grant. The Conservation 20/20 Program is a land acquisition, restoration and maintenance program of lands important to water quality, water supply, flow ways, flood areas as well as wildlife habitat and resource oriented public use.


Properties are nominated by willing sellers and then evaluated and selected according to their environmental benefits. Conservation easements are an integral part of the selection process of environmentally sensitive properties. Knowing where they are located is very important so that isolated wetland and flow way systems can be connected. Not knowing about the existence of a conservation easement could prevent the protection of a connected system as a nomination may appear incorrectly to be isolated and would consequently not be selected.

Unfortunately, Lee County does not have a complete record of conservation easements, especially those required for older developments. A map and database of all the conservation easements would be very useful to our land acquisition program. Important land acquisition opportunities may be overlooked due to a lack of adequate data. In addition, the knowledge of a conservation easement and its managing agency would provide opportunities for restoration and maintenance partnerships on Conservation 20/20 land.

Lee County needs as many tools as possible to develop and implement the Conservation 20/20 Program. A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database would provide another good tool toward achieving the best environmental lands for acquisition, restoration and maintenance.

The Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program strongly encourages you in this project and wishes you every success.

Sincerely,

  
Lynda Thompson, AICP  
Conservation 20/20 Program Coordinator

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## MANATEE COUNTY FLORIDA

April 2, 2013

Jim Beever  
Planner IV  
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Ft. Myers, Florida 33901

Dear Mr. Beever,

The Manatee County Natural Resources Department supports your proposed project, "**A Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida**" for funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's FY 13 Region 4 Wetland Program Development Grant.

Conservation easements have increasingly become a preferred tool used in wetland regulatory permitting, wetland conservation, and wetland mitigation banking in the state of Florida. At this time there is no complete map and database for all the conservation easements in Florida. It would be very useful to our wetland protection and conservation programs to be able to correctly identify and locate the conservation easements in our and adjacent jurisdictions to provide better management and restorations of wetlands, improve watershed management of wetlands, and reduce land use change conflicts with the conservation easements.

Governments need as many tools as possible to develop and implement landscape scale wetland protection and restoration and to improve public access and enjoyment of our valuable wetland resources. Manatee County's economy is based upon a healthy environmental quality provided by healthy wetland ecosystems that support the vital economic activities of fisheries, agriculture and tourism. A **Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database** would provide another good tool toward improving water quality and enhancing wetlands in Florida.

The project supports all of the conservation land management programs and watershed management programs important to Manatee County.

The Manatee County Natural Resources Department strongly encourages you in this project and wishes you every success.

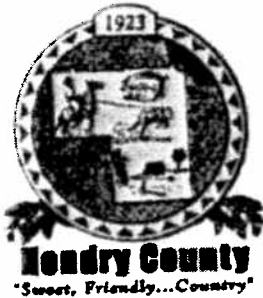
Sincerely,

Charlie Hunsicker, Director  
Natural Resources Department

Natural Resources Department  
Street Address: 202 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue East, Bradenton, FL 34208  
WEB: [www.myanatee.org](http://www.myanatee.org) \* PHONE: 941.742.5980 \* FAX: 941.742.5996

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LARRY BUSTLE \* MICHAEL GALLEN \* JOHN R. CHAPPIE \* ROBIN DISABATINO \* VANESSA BAUGH \* CAROL WHITMORE \* BETSY BENAC  
District 1      District 2      District 3      District 4      District 5      District 6      District 7



**HENDRY COUNTY**  
**Board of County Commissioners**  
**P.O. Box 2340**  
**LaBelle, Florida 33975-2340**

**Mark F. Lapp**  
County Attorney  
Interim County Administrator

**Barbara Butler**  
Clerk  
of the Courts

March 27, 2013

Mr. Jim Beever  
Planner IV  
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council  
1926 Victoria Avenue  
Ft. Myers, Florida 33901

Dear Mr. Beever,

Hendry County supports the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council's proposed project, "**Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database for the State of Florida**" for funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's FY 13 Region 4 Wetland Program Development Grant.

Conservation easements have increasingly become a preferred tool used in wetland regulatory permitting, wetland conservation, and wetland mitigation banking in the state of Florida. At this time, there is no complete map and database for all existing and proposed conservation easements in Florida. This would be a useful tool for Hendry County's short-term and long-term land use planning for development which includes the preservation/conservation of significant natural resources. Currently 42% of land in Hendry County is under some form of public ownership or conservation easement. This has created a serious hardship on the tax base in the county. Planning for sustainable and viable economic growth is key to the County's future.

Governments need as many tools as possible to develop and implement sound policies and strategies for successful communities, ecosystems, and economic development. A **Unified Conservation Easement Mapping and Database** would provide another good tool toward improving the quality of life for Floridians and enhancing natural resources in Florida.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Turner", written over a circular embossed seal.

Karson Turner, Chairman

KT/jp

Janet B. Taylor  
District 1

Darrell Harris  
District 2

Don Davis  
District 3

Al Perry  
District 4

Karson Turner  
District 5